



About: European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) input into the 2019 Work Programme concerning the promotion of agricultural products.

The European Union (EU) product promotion policy¹ finances demand-oriented information and promotion campaigns, with the ultimate aim to increase the market share and consumption of certain European food products.

This policy is implemented in a context in which non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer, are responsible for 86% of all deaths and 77% of all diseases in Europe, amounting to healthcare costs of around €700 billion per year.² Harmful alcohol use and unhealthy diets are among the leading, and preventable, NCD risk factors.

For instance, cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the EU, with dietary risks responsible for 49% of the cardiovascular disease burden, at an estimated annual cost of €102 billion.³ At the global level, a nutrition transition is taking place, manifesting in a major rise in obesity which has a crippling effect on countries' human and economic development.⁴

Therefore, and in light of Article 168(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which mandates that the EU pursues a high level of human health protection in the development and implementation of all its policies, as well as following the EU's commitment to implement the Global Sustainable Development Goals, which include the reduction of NCDs,⁵ it is important to envision a promotion policy that integrates healthy nutrition and alcohol harm reduction considerations at its core.

EPHA recommends that promotion policy should be regarded as an opportunity to encourage more diverse, sustainable and healthy diets, in line with established healthy dietary guidelines.⁶ Financial allocations should be progressively earmarked to reflect a food group's proportional contribution to a healthy diet, and a methodology to this end should be elaborated with input from qualified experts. The policy should also progressively focus on the internal market, to maximise benefits to European citizens and taxpayers.

Such policy orientation will also support the agricultural and food sector's competitiveness by helping it adapt to citizen's concerns about healthy nutrition, as highlighted in the Commission Communication *The Future of Food and Farming*.⁷

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1144/2014

² European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/major_chronic_diseases/docs/reflection_process_cd_final_report_en.pdf

³ European Heart Network <http://www.ehnheart.org/publications-and-papers/publications/1093:transforming-european-food-and-drinks-policies-for-cardiovascular-health.html>

⁴ Global Nutrition Report <http://www.globalnutritionreport.org/>

⁵ United Nations, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg3>

⁶ See for instance, the WHO healthy diet factsheet <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs394/en/>

⁷ European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/future-of-cap/future_of_food_and_farming_communication_en.pdf



For the 2019 work programme, EPHA proposes to earmark financial resources for those foods whose increased consumption is likely to contribute to more diverse and healthy diets. Food categories to have an earmarked budget should at least include fresh fruit and vegetables; and whole grain products with balanced nutritional profiles (i.e. low in fat, sugar and salt), as for instance conceptualised under the Danish Whole Grain Logo.⁸

We welcome this opportunity to provide feedback to the work programme, and look forward to further discuss these proposals with you,

Sincerely yours,

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⁸ Danish Whole Grain Logo <http://www.fuldkorn.dk/english>